



# COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE PUBLICATION:**  
May 14, 2011

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## **FLASH MOB AND DRUM CIRCLES HIGHLIGHT OF MENTAL HEALTH MONTH**

**Hundreds of People Turn Out for “Drumming Out Stigma”**

People attending a mental health celebration at Balboa Park today unexpectedly found themselves in the middle of a flash mob and many joined in by dancing to the beat of “Men in Black.”

The flash mob was a surprise to many of the hundreds of participants at the “Drumming Out Stigma” event, organized by the County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) and its many mental health partners to commemorate May as Mental Health Month.

“Today, we are here to drum out stigma and we’re going to do it together,” said Jamin Peck from Recovery Innovations of California as he welcomed participants to the event. “Stigma keeps people from getting help and we need to change that.”

During the two-hour celebration, attendees—many of them from mental health clubhouses throughout the region—also participated in drumming circles. They played drums, water jugs, pails, and other types of percussion instruments. Research has demonstrated that drumming is a valuable treatment for stress, fatigue, anxiety, hypertension, mental illness, and several other mental and physical disabilities. A clubhouse is a place where people with a mental illness can go to rebuild their lives, get employment assistance, , build confidence, make friends, and have fun.

Some people at the event shared their stories of mental illness and recovery; others visited the resource booths and gathered information on the signs of mental illness and the services available to treat mental health challenges.

“By eliminating stigma, people will feel more comfortable getting the help they need,” HHSA Director Nick Macchione said recently. “Mental health is an important component of the County’s Live Well, San Diego! initiative, which aims to improve the health and quality of life of all San Diegans.”

One in four adults experience a mental health disorder during any given year, according to the National Institute of Mental Health. About 61,000 people benefit from County-funded mental health services each year.

“Events like this help to change the way our community views people, friends and family members who are living with a mental illness,” said Alfredo Aguirre, Director of HHSA’s Mental Health Services. “This is a great opportunity for people to educate themselves about mental illness, to share their stories on recovery and resiliency, and to learn they are not alone. We are here to help.”

People suffering from a mental illness can access services by calling the County’s 24-hour, multi-lingual Access and Crisis Line at (800) 479-3339.

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